

THE TRADE OF NORFOLK

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satisfactory, and great developments are expected in the Western fields.

As a rule, truck farming in Virginia pays handsomely. There are years when the net returns are small, but as a general average the farmers are well to do, and nearly all of them have money in bank to their credit. It will be remembered in the financial panic two years ago that the money deposited in the banks of Norfolk to the credit of the farmers of Eastern Virginia saved this financial centre from inconvenience. The farm lands of this highly favored section are attracting the attention of the agriculturalists of the West, who are now negotiating for the purchase of lands with a view to locating.

Thrifty Western people, accustomed to contend with heat and cold, can find delightful homes and surroundings—a land protected from the Western cyclone by the everlasting hills of the Blue Ridge and Alleghany mountains, upon whose western walls the northern blasts beat in impotent fury. While sections South have suffered severely from West Indian tornadoes, Norfolk and the surrounding counties have been safe. Storms from the Gulf sweep up the coast and are met by the strong arm of Cape Hatteras, which says "so far and no farther," and are diverted to the east to waste in old ocean. The destruction of crops in Norfolk's immediate section, either from heat or cold, is so nominal as not to be taken into account by the agriculturist, whose seed time and harvest continues the year round.

DRY GOODS.

With the sharpest competition with Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and New England, the dry goods merchants, wholesale and retail, have been able to increase the business of 1884, which was \$1,500,000, to \$3,000,000 in 1894. These goods go to Virginia, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Georgia. Norfolk's merchants have been conservative buyers and careful sellers, consequently the amounts entered to profit and loss have been comparatively small. The trade is satisfactory.

HAY, FEED AND GRAIN.

The hay, feed and grain business of this port is large and important. Owing to the sharpest competition the increase in value of business has not been so marked as in other lines, but has been healthy, reliable and satisfactory. In 1881 the business, including exportation, was \$1,700,000. The transactions of the past year will reach \$3,000,000.

LIQUOR TRADE.

The wholesale and retail liquor business in Norfolk will amount to \$2,500,000 annually. There are several wholesale and rectifying houses, but no distilleries. The whiskey merchants have customers in the interior counties of Virginia and North Carolina, but owing to the dispensary law, their drummers no longer travel in North Carolina. The sale of beer and mineral waters is for home consumption.

THE MANUFACTURE OF FERTILIZERS.

The manufacture of fertilizers is one of the important industries of Norfolk. There are twelve firms who do an aggregate business of \$2,000,000, against \$800,000 in 1881. These firms have their offices in the city and manufacturing mills in the suburbs. It is estimated that about 1,000 laborers are employed at from \$1 to \$1.50 per day. High grade fertilizers are manufactured, and, under Virginia laws passed by the State to prevent fraud being practiced upon consumers, are sold to the farmers of Virginia and the Carolinas. The state of the trade is satisfactory.

VIRGINIA'S GREAT SHELLFISH.

Norfolk enjoys the reputation for having the prettiest women and the best oysters in the world. Virginia has just begun to realize that the products of her magnificent bay, the Chesapeake, are a source of wealth, and has enacted laws, vigorously enforced, for their protection. It has been estimated that the revenues derived from the State tax on oysters will easily support the educational and charitable institutions of the State. It is generally known that the twenty-one packers of this vicinity will do a business of \$3,000,000 this year, against \$1,000,000 in 1881, an increase of 100 per cent. in ten years. They employ about 2,500 men as openers, who get from \$1 to \$1.50 per day; clerks, packers and helpers, 300, making a total of 2,800 people who are employed by this industry. The increase is due to extension of trade. As Norfolk's oysters are the best, they find ready sale in the face of competition from Maine to Mexico and as far West as Pueblo, Col. In the West and Northwest, Norfolk comes in competition with Baltimore and the Eastern Shore of Maryland. New York is also attracting some importance as an oyster market, selling mainly in the Northwest.

In the South Norfolk encounters Mobile and Savannah, and while the Southern oyster, especially those of the Gulf, are large and fat, their flavor is defective. When delivered in proper condition the oysters of the Virginia waters are not affected by competition. The industry is in excellent condition, and the possibilities for development are unlimited. It may be said that while the fish is as old as the State and its value appreciated by those to the manner born, yet the taste is acquired and

the far inland markets lack education, which under a system of vigorous drumming will be eventually obtained, and with greater demands will come greater production. Fortunately there is no overstocking and but little loss in transit. So long as the waters of the Chesapeake shall ebb and flow, just so long will the oysters of Virginia meet all competition.

WILD FOWL AND GAME.

Norfolk has for many years been an extensive market for the sale of wild fowl. The waters of Virginia and the Carolinas are frequented by the best species of game birds, swan, geese and ducks. The fresh water lakes which find an outlet through Albemarle sound are especially the feeding ground of the canvas back duck. During the last ten years deer and bear have been driven from their haunts in the Blue Ridge mountains by railroad extensions and mine developments, and now in great numbers find shelter in the woodlands and swamps of Eastern Virginia. During the shooting season, which begins about the 15th of September and continues till April, thousands of birds and larger game fall from the shot of the "pot hunter" as well as the sportsmen. Albemarle sound and its tributary lakes and bays is a veritable hunters' paradise, and is the headquarters of eight shooting clubs, brought into prominence of late by the visits of two Presidents.

FISH MARKET.

The rivers of Virginia, especially those tributary to Chesapeake bay, are well stocked with salt and fresh water fish, and the traffic in choice species of the finny tribe is large and remunerative the year round. It is hard to get exact figures, as many of the owners of sloops and schooners who cast their nets into the waters of the Chesapeake discharge their cargoes at the wharves of the steamship lines, where they are freighted to Northern commission merchants. The season opens about the 1st of April and continues till November. There are no better fishing grounds along the Atlantic coast than the banks of Virginia.

Fishing is an independent, inexpensive industry, requiring but a small outlay of capital. No land tenure is needed; the rivers and bays are free to all, and the humblest negro who pines his vocation in a diminutive flat boat has all rights enjoyed by the opulent owner of fishing steamers and pound nets. Including the billions of fish caught annually for fertilizing purposes, employing numerous steamers, the business is estimated to be worth \$1,000,000 annually.

BOOTS AND SHOES.

The merchants of Norfolk report that 1894 has been an exceptionally hard year, and that they have been careful to sell only high edged custom. The competition has been most persistent and goods sold upon the slightest margin. There are five wholesale boot and shoe dealers in Norfolk and a number of large retail dealers whose business, at a very low estimate, carefully compiled, amount to \$1,500,000 this year, against \$950,000 in 1894, a gain in volume of \$550,000 in ten years. These goods were sold in Virginia, the Carolinas and Tennessee.

There have been no extensions of trade into new territory, but the merchants feel that they are to be congratulated that they have been able to hold customers who have been buying here for ten years or more.

TOBACCO AND CIGARS.

Norfolk has an extensive jobbing trade in tobacco and cigars, and the business shows great gains over the estimates of 1881. There are in Norfolk and vicinity thirty manufacturing factories of cigars, but no manufacturing of tobacco. The retail trade is supplied by jobbers whose drummers travel in all the counties and towns of Eastern Virginia, North and South Carolina. The Virginia is assured that the outlook for 1895 is very promising.

THE PEANUT TRADE.

Norfolk enjoys the distinction of being the largest peanut market in the United States. For some years past the dealers claimed that they had made no money, and consequently an association was formed, in which all of the large dealers in other Virginia cities became members, for the purpose of controlling output and regulating prices. This association has done much to improve the condition of the trade. There are six firms in Norfolk, whose business last year footed up \$1,050,000. They occupy handsome brick warehouses from three to six stories high and fitted with the latest improved machinery. There are about 650 laborers employed, women, girls and boys, at from 40c to \$1 each per day. The clerical force will number fifty men, who are paid from \$1.50 to \$1 per day.

As compared with 1884, the trade shows a falling off of \$120,000, which is not a loss in business, but in prices of goods. Norfolk practically controls the markets of the world, but since 1881 prices have had a downward tendency, which could not be checked. The number of bags handled by this market last year was in excess of 1884 more than 100,000.

CLOTHING, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

It is almost impossible to obtain exact figures in regard to the total sales of clothing for any given time. The business is extensive, there being more than seventy-five merchants in Norfolk who handle in one way or another ready made clothing. The business of 1884 was estimated to be worth \$625,000. After most careful investigation, the figures of 1894 are placed at \$1,500,000.

GENERAL COMMISSION.

The general commission business of the port, not including cotton and coal, is valued at about \$1,500,000. There is a large and lucrative trade in butter, eggs and general country produce. The merchants of this line sell for the farmers, truckers and poultry raisers of Virginia and North Carolina, and all stock not taken by the local trade is shipped North via the various fast rail and steamship lines. The business is in a most healthy condition.

FLOUR AND MEAL.

The VIRGINIAN, in 1881, estimated the flour and meal business of this port at \$160,000. At that time there were no local mills and a much smaller population to feed. During the last ten years three mills have been erected, one grinding exclusively wheat and making high grade flours at the rate of 150 barrels per day. This mill was erected with Northern money and has been a phenomenal success. The corn mills are also doing well, principally supply local demands. Norfolk now has an export trade in flour valued the past year at nearly \$200,000. The entire business for the past twelve months, retail and wholesale, foreign and domestic, is valued at \$1,435,000, showing increased gains during the last decade.

BUILDING MATERIALS.

During the past few years the hum of the saw and the clank of the hammer has been increasing. The building of the beautiful town of homes in the Fifth Ward and manufacturing town in the Sixth Ward, also the stately mansions in Ghent have drawn heavily for building materials, and the trade in this particular line has been very active.

Under the general head of building materials, there are many articles to be found in various branches of trade. A careful compilation in 1881, before the era of great industrial activity in Norfolk, put the business at \$900,000. An estimate for the past year, equally as conservative, fixes the aggregate at \$1,500,000.

A GREAT HORSE MARKET.

Norfolk now stands at the head of all the Southern cities as a market for the sale of horses of all grades and conditions. In 1881 the trade was so limited as not to be counted in the general estimate of business. In 1894, \$1,000,000 will not cover the amount of sales for this year. These animals were received from Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Illinois, Ohio and Kentucky. The large majority of them were ordinary work horses, but many were the best Kentucky thoroughbred riding and driving stock. The purchasers were from New York, Baltimore, Washington, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

The trade is increasing rapidly. One firm expects to do a business in 1895 of \$1,000,000, and it is safe to say that the present proportions will be doubled in the next two years. A shipment of 500 mules was recently made to Cuba, and with proper attention to the West Indies it is believed very valuable commercial relations can be established.

KNITTING MILLS.

Norfolk does not alone depend upon her shipping interests and general trade. During the past ten years there has been great development in such manufactures as are especially adapted to this section, and it is a matter of congratulation that these industries have prospered in no small degree. The first knitting mill was built in 1880. It stood alone for nine years and successfully tested the ability of Norfolk manufacturers in this particular line, the making of over and under wear for men, women and children, and between 1889 and '92 three other mills were added.

These four mills have been almost constantly in operation, employing 750 persons, about 40 per cent being females. The gross output of the four mills will amount to \$1,000,000 annually. At least \$250,000 of this amount goes to labor. The cotton is purchased of local dealers and in the factories goes through all the processes of manufacture from the raw cotton to the completed garment. The mill property, including machinery, cost not less than \$500,000. All of the buildings are of brick and fitted with the latest improved machinery.

The Norfolk manufacturers, owing to location, mild climate, reliable and honest labor, unexcelled facilities for shipping, cheap coal and cheap raw material (virtually "manufactured upon the hill"), have been able to meet all competition and sell goods in every State and Territory in the Union.

MANUFACTURE OF BARRELS AND BOXES.

Norfolk is one of the largest markets in the South for the manufacture and sale of boxes, barrels and crates for the shipment of fruits and vegetables. The industry has grown greater in the past few years and this city at present furnishes the planters and fruit growers of Eastern Virginia and the Carolinas, having practically a monopoly of this trade. The boxes and barrels are nearly all Norfolk inventions and are covered and protected by patents. The trade, which is worth \$1,000,000 annually, is divided between about one dozen firms, who employ 200 hands at wages ranging from \$1 to \$1.50 per day. For this particular trade the outlook is very promising. Some of the plants are large, covering acres of ground and are supplied with the best machinery.

LIVE STOCK.

The trade in cattle, sheep and hogs antedates the traffic in horses many years, and was an important

business long before the most progressive dealers in horseflesh conceived the idea that Norfolk could be developed into the leading market in the South for fancy driving and work stock. From the most reliable sources THE VIRGINIAN learns that in 1891 there were sold in this city cows, oxen, sheep and hogs, etc., valued at \$310,000, as against \$100,000 in 1881. Beef cattle are received from Southwest Virginia and Tennessee. A majority of the milk cows are high grade Jerseys, Alderneys and Holsteins, and are purchased in Baltimore for the dairy farms in this vicinity.

These farm cattle are received at Lambert's Point, where they are inspected by an officer of the United States Government, who is an expert veterinary surgeon, and as a consequence, there has been little or no disease among the cows of this vicinity. The dairymen of the surrounding counties have greatly improved their stock in the last ten years, and have, by a system of careful inspection, prevented the spread of tuberculosis and kindred diseases, which might have developed in their herds.

DRUGS WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

No very extensive gains have been made in the drug trade for some years. The market has held its own, doing a good, steady business. The wholesale merchants sell to the best trade of Eastern Virginia and the Carolinas. The business will amount to about \$800,000 annually, which is considered a very conservative estimate after careful investigation.

HARDWARE TRADE.

During the last ten years there have been heavy reductions in the prices of all light hardware, which have been of vast importance to the tiller of the soil and the contractor and house builder. Norfolk's hardware trade has greatly advanced, yet the volume of business does not show very decided gains. In 1881 the trade of this city was estimated to be worth \$550,000. For 1894 the estimate, carefully calculated, is \$750,000. Goods are sold to Virginia and the Carolinas.

BRICK AND STONE.

In the vicinity of Norfolk are several clay pits peculiarly adapted to the manufacture of a superior quality of brick. Taken in connection with the manufacture of carbons for building and paving, the aggregate of the business is valued at \$750,000 annually. The laborers employed, in the main, are cheap.

SHIP CHANDLERY AND RAILROAD SUPPLIES.

There are seven firms dealing in such articles as go to make the general supplies for steamboat lines and railroads. There is great development in this trade, which has increased from \$150,000 in 1881 to \$225,000 in 1894.

FURNITURE.

THE VIRGINIAN, after most careful investigation, estimates the trade of Norfolk in furniture to be worth in round numbers about \$600,000. This business, while in the main retail, is in the hands of progressive men who can supply the country trade of all the counties of Eastern Virginia and the Carolinas.

HATS AND CAPS.

For a number of years Norfolk houses have been doing a very satisfactory business in hats and caps, wholesale and retail. The whole sale dealers have been able to meet competition from markets North, and to sell the retail trade in Eastern Virginia and the Carolinas. There are a number of retail dealers who carry full lines of the best goods. The total sales of 1891 are placed at \$350,000, against \$225,000 in 1881.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.

The trade of Norfolk in this line is exceptionally large, as compared with most cities several times our population. We have here three agricultural implement manufacturers, who produce mainly patented goods of their own invention. These manufacturers have not only the trade of the country immediately tributary to Norfolk, but they have demand as far South as Florida and Texas, as far West as the Mississippi river, and much of the country north of us is supplied with Norfolk specialties in the implement line through dealers in New York, Philadelphia and other large cities.

In our trade issue of 1884 the estimate of Norfolk's output in agricultural implements was \$150,000. While there has been a most satisfactory increase in the number of implements sold, the shrinkage in values would offset any dollars and cents increase which we would otherwise be able now to report. Merchants report that the outlook for the business of 1895 is very promising, and they feel their ability to occupy new territory further West with advantage.

BAKERIES.

The bakers report no special advance in business. There are a dozen or more local dealers who supply the retail trade, and upon notice any vessels that may be at the wharves. The business is within the aggregate about \$350,000 annually.

CONFECTIONERY DEALERS.

The trade in candies, domestic and foreign, will amount to \$800,000 per year. There are five firms who employ about 125 hands. A large part of the goods handled are made here and sold to the local trade, and the merchants of the Virginia and Carolina counties.

FOUNDRY AND IRON WORKS.

There are in this city six iron works, occupying substantial buildings, fitted with the latest improved

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THE CITY OF NORFOLK

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needed by the Albemarle and Chesapeake, and the Diamond Swamp canals and the Norfolk and South ern road with Currituck, Albemarle and Pamlico sounds, and their tributaries in North Carolina, aggregating 2,000 miles of navigable waters. A glance at the trade area map will show that nature has endowed our city richly with her roadways and opened to us the avenues to commercial prosperity with an unestimated hand. She has given us 2,000 miles of water highways over which the products of the country they penetrate should seek Norfolk as their nearest and best market and over which in return should pass all merchandise required for consumption by the inhabitants of that territory. The States of Indiana, Illinois and Nebraska are nearer, geographically, to Norfolk than to New York, and the demands of this immense region, the granary of the world, will in a few years avail of air line communication with our city as the most advantageous port for export of their produce.

No city in America, except New York, is so directly connected with the trade centres of this country and Europe by steamship and steamer lines than Norfolk. Her connection with South America via Newport News (from which Norfolk is only divided by a ferry) is exceptionally good. Then, too, are the direct lines to Europe—the Furness line of Newport News, with its six splendid freight steamers, and the Norfolk and North America Steamship Company whose steamships load at Lambert's Point. These great freight steamships carry cotton, tobacco, grain, lumber, cattle and other products to Europe. Besides Norfolk has American built and American owned steam vessels, of all classes, connecting her directly with the capitals of our State and country (Richmond and Washington), with Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York city, Providence, Boston and all points East, whilst connecting lines of steamboats and steamships, controlled by the same parties who own and operate lines of railroad from Norfolk, connect her with all cities and towns on the Southern coast of the United States. These water lines not only serve as auxiliaries to the different rail lines, which put Norfolk "in touch" with the same points, but furnish a healthy competition.

The future of Norfolk was never brighter than now. Our commerce is larger than ever before, and our great natural advantages are now being appreciated by the commercial world. In making known these advantages THE VIRGINIAN has had much to do. Its compilation of the business statistics of the port, by its first attempt, and its circulation of special issues of thousands of copies, all through this country and through the old world, first centered general attention to our city. Since 1878, the date of our first trade issue, we have witnessed the greatest impetus to our growth and prosperity; all branches of trade have prospered.

The first systematic compilation of the trade of Norfolk, was presented by THE VIRGINIAN in its celebrated trade issue of Monday, October 4th, 1880. It was a paper that comprised a vast amount of business statistics. In our special issue of August 5th, 1879, a very complete statement was furnished. Both these issues commanded conspicuous attention, not only throughout the United States, but abroad. We issued editions of 10,000 copies and Norfolk was never better or more thoroughly advertised. Since the issue of these papers, our city has been more spoken of, and a greater prosperity has been witnessed than ever before recorded in its history.

In 1880 our trade exhibit presented a business of \$18,200,436; that of 1882 a business of \$25,011,636, an increase of nearly \$7,000,000. The exhibit of the business of 1883, was \$18,007,500, which was due to the amount of cotton handled, which was lessened in every port of the country, because of shortage of the crop. In 1885 the volume of trade reached \$31,651,585. In 1893 it reached the splendid showing of \$73,000,240; while the exhibit for 1894 showed a business of \$91,198,348.

The exhibit and growth and development of Norfolk, in area, population and business, appears in detail in other columns of THE VIRGINIAN of this issue. The showing is one that all can be proud of, and it demonstrates to the world the wonderful possibilities of the future of this great port.

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